

CLAIMS

Claims 1-40 (Canceled)

Claim 41 (Currently Amended): A slicing machine for slicing food products [[(1)]], in particular blocks of sausage, meat or cheese, having comprising a rotating cutting blade [[(2)]], which is mounted so as to be displaceable parallel to its axis of rotation (3) a rotation axis of the cutting blade, characterised in that it comprises and a counterweight [[(4)]], which may be displaced is axially displaced in the opposite direction from the cutting blade [[(2)]].

Claim 42 (Canceled):

Claim 43 (Currently Amended): [[A]] The slicing machine according to any one of the preceding of claim[[s]] 41, characterised in that wherein displacement of the cutting blade, (2) and/or of the counterweight, or both [[(4)]] takes place independently of [[the]] a rotational speed of the cutting blade.

Claim 44 (Currently Amended): [[A]] The slicing machine according to any one of the preceding of claim[[s]] 43, characterised in that the cutting blade further comprises[[es]]ing a drive shaft [[(5)]], wherein and in that the cutting blade, (2) and/or the counterweight, or both (4) is(are) is mounted so as to be displaceable along the drive shaft [[(5)]].

Claim 45 - 49 (Canceled):

Claim 50 (Currently Amended): A method for axial displacement of a cutting blade[[s]] during operation of a slicing machine, comprising the steps of axially displacing characterised in that a counterweight [[(4)]] on a drive shaft [[(5)]] of the cutting blade is displaced in [[the]] an opposite direction from the cutting blade [[(2)]].

Claim 51 (Currently Amended): [[A]] The method according to of claim 50, characterised in that displacement wherein the displacing step, the displacement of the counterweight and the cutting blade are achieved is effected synchronously.

Claim 52 (Currently Amended): ~~[[A]] The method according to of claim 50, characterised in that wherein~~ displacement of the cutting blade, ~~(2)~~ and of the counterweight, or both ~~[(4)]~~ is effected ~~achieved~~ by a ~~spindle drive~~ ~~(6)~~.

Claim 53 (Currently Amended): ~~A method of using at least one Use of counterweight[[s]] in a slicing machine comprising the steps of (4) displaceably axially displacing the at least one counterweight in the opposite direction from a cutting blade [[(2)]] to stabilise the running of the cutting blade [[(2)]] of [[a]] the slicing machine, which wherein the cutting blade includes an axis of rotation, and the cutting blade, the counterweight, or both is mounted so as to be displaceable parallel to [[its]] the axis of rotation [[(3)]].~~

Claim 54 (Currently Amended): ~~The method of Use according to claim 53, characterised in that wherein the step of axially displacing the at least one counterweight compensates for forces, and/or moments, or both arising during displacement of the blade are compensated.~~

Claim 55 (Currently Amended): ~~The method of claim 53 Use according to claim 13 or claim 14, characterised in that the further comprising the step of adjusting a zero point may be adjusted by axial displacement of the cutting blade [[(2)]] of [[a]] the slicing machine.~~

Claim 56 (Currently Amended): ~~The method Use according to claim 53, characterised in that the further comprising the step of measuring a torque produced by a of the drive of the cutting blade during is measured during displacement thereof.~~

Claim 57 – 67 (Canceled):

Claim 68 (Currently Amended): ~~The slicing machine A device according to of claim 41, characterised in that wherein adjustment of [[the]] a cutting gap is effected when is achieved while the cutting blade is stationary or rotating.~~

Claim 69 (Currently Amended): ~~The slicing machine A device according to of claim 41, characterised in that the wherein an axial position of the cutting blade is not~~

substantially changed after [[it]] the cutting blade has come into contact with [[the]]
an adjusting limit stop.

Claim 70 - 75 (Canceled):

Claim 76 (New): The slicing machine of claim 41, wherein the counterweight is axially displaced relative to a feedback controlled drive shaft.

Claim 77 (New): The slicing machine of claim 76, wherein the cutting blade is axially displaceable along the drive shaft in the same or opposite direction of the counterweight.

Claim 78 (New): The slicing machine of claim 41, wherein the cutting blade is a circular blade, a helical blade, or a crescent shaped blade.

Claim 79 (New): The slicing machine of claim 78, wherein the cutting blade is a crescent shaped blade.

Claim 80 (New): The slicing machine of claim 78, wherein the displacement of the cutting blade, the counterweight, or both is achieved by a spindle arranged within the drive shaft, the spindle including a feedback-controlled drive that interacts with a thread of at least one sleeve, which is connected with the cutting blade, the counterweight, or both, for independent movement thereof.

Claim 81 (New): The slicing machine of claim 41, wherein the displacement of the cutting blade, the counterweight, or both is achieved by a spindle arranged within the drive shaft, the spindle including a feedback-controlled drive that interacts with a thread of at least one sleeve, which is connected with the cutting blade, the counterweight, or both, for independent movement thereof.

Claim 82 (New): The slicing machine of claim 78, wherein the drive shaft is driven by a toothed belt wheel, which interacts with the feedback-controlled drive; and wherein the counterweight is mounted non-rotationally, but axially displaceably on one or more bushes on the drive shaft, the drive shaft including a spindle, which is connected by way of a toothed belt wheel to the feedback-controlled drive.